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ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY

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THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR

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A STUDY

SUBMITTED BY THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

STAFFING AND OPERATIONS

(Pursuant to S. Res. 279, 88th Cong.)

TO THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE



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## FOREWORD

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Under the Constitution, it is the responsibility of the Senate to advise and consent to appointments of Ambassadors.

Probably not one American in ten could name the American Ambassadors to France, Germany, Russia, and Japan, let alone our Ambassadors to Cyprus, the Congo, and Malaysia, to pick a few contemporary trouble spots. But our Ambassadors—though the news stories seldom mention their names—are our representatives on the front lines of history, where a misstep may mean a costly setback or even a crisis endangering peace.

As Congress recognizes, there is no substitute for the broadly-experienced Ambassador who exercises leadership of American government activities in his area, who makes a positive contribution to policy plans and operations, and who has reserves of judgment, nerve, and know-how to call upon in a pinch.

From the start of its nonpartisan study of the administration of national security, the Subcommittee on National Security Staffing and Operations has given major attention to the role of the modern American Ambassador in the conduct of our relations with other countries, and the support given him in Washington.

The Subcommittee has received the counsel of ranking authorities in this country and in U.S. missions and military establishments abroad. It has released testimony on the office of Chief of Mission by Secretary of State Rusk, Under Secretary of State Harriman, and Deputy Under Secretary of State Crockett. A series of published hearings and memoranda constitute a unique symposium of retired and active American Ambassadors—Ellis O. Briggs, H. Freeman Matthews, Edwin O. Reischauer, David K. E. Bruce, Samuel D. Berger, George F. Kennan, Lincoln Gordon, Livingston T. Merchant, Edmund A. Gullion, and Foy D. Kohler.

The Subcommittee has also published an historical study, *The Ambassador and the Problem of Coordination*, prepared by the Historical Studies Division of the Department of State.

This Subcommittee staff report—companion to one issued earlier this year entitled *The Secretary of State*—makes certain findings about the role of the Ambassador in assisting the President and the Secretary of State in developing and executing national security policy.

HENRY M. JACKSON,  
*Chairman, Subcommittee on  
National Security Staffing  
and Operations.*

JUNE 15, 1964.

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## ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY

### THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR

#### I. The Ambassador's Problem

I am sorry to know nothing more of the subject than that letter after letter has been written to you thereon, and that the office is in possession of nothing more than acknowledgements of your receipt of some of them so long ago as Aug. 1786, and still to add that your letter of Jan. 24, 1791, is the only one received of later date than May 6, 1789. You certainly will not wonder if the receipt of but one letter in two years & an half inspires a considerable degree of impatience.

Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Letter to William Carmichael, American Chargé in Spain, Nov. 6, 1791

Secretary Jefferson's "impatience" with Mr. Carmichael is not likely to be echoed in 1964. Today the daily volume of telegraphic traffic alone between the State Department and the embassies is more than 400,000 words.

The jet plane and electronic communications, on the one hand, and America's world involvements, on the other, have combined to complicate enormously and in part transform the role of American Ambassador.

The traditional functions—negotiation, representation, and reporting—have changed because issues can be referred rapidly to Washington, or handled by officers coming from Washington, or decided in Washington in talks with visiting heads of state, prime ministers, foreign ministers, or other high officials. If all roads once led to Rome, all airways now lead to Washington.

With respect to negotiation, the role of the modern Ambassador is much reduced—often he is but one part of a negotiating team in a complex diplomatic operation. If an issue is of some importance, the matter will probably be handled directly between the Department of State and the Foreign Office, with the Ambassador playing an intermediary or supporting role. When the Ambassador conducts negotiations, he will receive detailed instructions. To be sure, the modern Ambassador is not a mere onlooker—his advice will be sought. Particularly men in remote posts, off diplomacy's beaten tracks, or assigned to countries not at the top level of Washington concern, have some scope in practicing the art of negotiation. Even so the cables run hot and heavy, and it is a far cry from the day when an Ambassador had to operate alone for long periods, guided by his own wisdom and wit, with very general instructions.

With respect to representation, it used to be that an Ambassador represented his sovereign at the court of the other sovereign. Now things are different. An Ambassador still has the tedious round of official parties and entertainment. He must still participate in the pomp and ceremony of official life. But he must also hold the hands

of newsmen, open doors for businessmen, and attend to visiting Congressmen. Besides, today's Ambassador is expected to get away from the capital and to acquire first-hand knowledge of the country's political, social and economic life. What the people are saying is often more important than the gossip of high society, and his business suits and even more informal attire may wear out sooner than his white tie and tails.

Posts, of course, vary greatly. In an emerging African nation, the host government may turn to the American Ambassador for advice on economics, or administration, or military affairs, or even internal political matters which would seldom, if ever, be sought by older and more established governments. In some areas, work with regional and international organizations is an added dimension for American diplomacy.

With respect to reporting, 50 years ago it may have been sufficient to cover the affairs of the court and the capital. No more. Now an Ambassador is called upon to view the society as a whole, to analyze the forces working for change, and to relate the problems of his country to wider problems and policies. Hence his reports must penetrate more deeply while the horizon of relevance has widened—and at the same time the number of reporters other than the Ambassador has grown with the number of agencies making up the American establishment.

Thus each of the elements of an Ambassador's traditional responsibility has altered. Meanwhile, a new executive role has been laid upon our Ambassadors. Since World War II the American Executive Branch has reproduced itself abroad in something approaching its full panoply of separate agencies—with all that implies in terms of overlapping jurisdictions, incompatible assignments, mutual jealousies, surplus staff, and the ruminations of innumerable committees. Not only State, but AID, USIS, the service attachés (Army, Navy, and Air Force), military assistance advisory groups (MAAGS), CIA, Treasury, Agriculture, science attachés, and the Peace Corps may be found at our major posts. There may also be an area military commander.

In Britain, for example, with which we have old ties and many common interests, at least 44 American agencies are represented in the Embassy. In the Soviet Union, where the "court" is still a dominating fact of life, the American mission more nearly resembles the classic embassy with limited tasks. In Korea our involvement is recent but very deep and the American establishment includes sizable American forces and military bases as well as a host of civilian agencies.

Except for the Communist bloc and a few small posts where our responsibilities are limited, the number of agencies and operating programs demands on-the-spot coordination and central supervision, lest inter-agency pulling and hauling dissipate American influence.

To meet this need Washington has turned to the Ambassador, whose authority is reinforced by his Presidential appointment and diplomatic precedence. Gradually, if unevenly, since World War II, the Truman, Eisenhower, and especially the Kennedy Administrations have tried to build the Ambassador's coordinating role into our tradition and get it accepted in the day-to-day operations of government agencies.

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But Washington giveth and Washington taketh away. In theory, the Ambassador is now more than *primus inter pares*. He is the active leader and director of American policies and programs. But practice often falls short, not least because Washington frequently undercuts the leadership and direction it asks him to provide.

In principle, our modern Chiefs of Mission are, like the President they serve, chief executives of large complex establishments, and as their other roles have changed—sometimes diminishing—this new executive role has come to the fore.

The result may be called the Ambassador's dilemma.

*One:* He is expected to perform his traditional diplomatic functions in a most untraditional setting, with less independence and less policy authority than Ambassadors once exercised—and with far more people under foot;

*Two:* He is expected to contribute to the policy process from the perspective of a single-country mission, while those at home who have to make the policies treat almost nothing as a single-country problem;

*Three:* He is expected to serve as leader and coordinator of his "country team" while lacking power or even much influence over the budgets, the personnel systems, the reporting requirements, and the operating policies of many of the field staffs theoretically subordinate to him.

His dilemma places a great burden on an Ambassador and ways must be found to improve and increase the support Washington gives him.

## II. The President and the Ambassador

I have made choice of [John Doe], a distinguished citizen of the United States, to reside near the Government of Your Excellency in the quality of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America. He is well informed of the relative interests of the two countries and of the sincere desire of this Government to cultivate to the fullest extent the friendship which has so long subsisted between them. My knowledge of his high character and ability gives me entire confidence that he will constantly endeavor to advance the interests and prosperity of both Governments and so render himself acceptable to Your Excellency.

President Lyndon B. Johnson, Letter of Credence of an Ambassador to a Chief of State, 1964

An Ambassador is the personal representative of our Chief of State and Government to the Chief of State to whom he is accredited.

In fact, however, most Ambassadors have only a remote relation to a President himself and are not recognized as members of his intimate official family. The very multitude of Ambassadors is one of the problems. Since 1960 the number of Chiefs of Mission to other governments has burgeoned over the one hundred mark, and this is too many for any President to know well.

A Chief of Mission customarily works in the framework of the State Department; he reports to the Department; his salary and administrative support come from the Department. The source of his instructions is normally the Secretary of State, acting for the President,

or, in appropriate cases, an Assistant Secretary of State, acting for the Secretary. This is as it should be.

But, in practice, an Ambassador needs status as the President's man. Present and former Ambassadors emphasized in testimony to the Subcommittee that a chief asset an Ambassador can bring to his job is the reputation for having the special confidence and trust of the President. When an Ambassador overseas negotiates, or speaks in private or in public, his audience needs to feel that he has the confidence and speaks with the authority of the President of the United States.

It is to the advantage of a President himself to have direct knowledge of his Chiefs of Mission. Under Secretary of State Averell Harriman made this comment to the Subcommittee:

The more Ambassadors that the President knows personally and has confidence in, the easier it is for him to act on the advice which comes from that embassy.

More Presidential directives stating that the Ambassador is the personal representative of the President are not likely to help. Whatever can be done in this regard by Presidential letter or order has already been accomplished by the successive efforts of the last three Presidents.

It is an advantage, of course, when a President has known some of his appointees at an earlier time. But no President is likely to be widely acquainted with members of the Foreign Service, especially with those at the deputy chief of mission (DCM) level who ought to be the main source of candidates. In these circumstances, the Department of State should make a special effort to bring promising career candidates to the personal attention of a President.

Fortunately, in our time, good men do not lack occasions to distinguish themselves, to become known to a President, and to win his respect.

Beyond that, the Department of State, the White House, and an ambassadorial appointee should cooperate to make the relationship of President and Ambassador more than routine. Hopefully, a President will come to know his key Chiefs of Mission at least as well as he does his top Washington officials and chief military leaders.

### III. The Modern Ambassador: Diplomat

Confidentially, and you must not betray my radical statement, it is a crime the way the higher staffs submerge the staffs and units below them with detailed instructions, endless paper reports and other indications of unfamiliarities with troop doings. I have come almost to feel that my principal duty as a Commander is to be out with the troops protecting them against my own staff \* \* \* I have gotten to the point where the sight of paper inflames me.

Brigadier General George C. Marshall, Letter to Major Paul E. Peabody, April 6, 1937

The modern Ambassador plies his diplomatic trade with less autonomy than in earlier days. But he is still the spearhead of American influence abroad. A President and a Secretary of State, in setting and maintaining our national course, are heavily dependent upon him for advice and help. And no quantity of messages and visitors from

Washington can take the place of an Ambassador's personal judgment and effectiveness in the field situation.

There are many ways in which Washington could fortify our Ambassadors in the exercise of their diplomatic responsibilities:

*A clear signal on national policies from Washington.*—An Ambassador cannot be effective if he is kept guessing about the policies of the administration he serves. And national policy begins at home.

A scarcity of documents is not the problem, they superabound—State Department Guidelines, Internal Defense Plans, Long-Range Assistance Studies, AID Program Books, USIS Country Plans, Military Assistance Five-Year Plans, and for some countries, National Policy Papers (NPP).

The underlying difficulty is found elsewhere. It consists in the frequent failure of Washington to provide a timely, coherent, approved policy line and to give the reasoning behind its action—and inaction. Ambiguity of policy is bound to result in missed opportunities to protect our position in situations abroad. It encourages those who do not have responsibility to jump across lines and get into the act, often, in the process, making a bad situation worse. It means that Washington speaks with too many—and conflicting—voices. This has been so under every administration.

*A strong rear echelon at headquarters.*—One recurrent complaint of American Ambassadors is that Washington takes too much time in replying to communications from the field.

The way to combat this blight is to provide an Ambassador with a strong working counterpart in the State Department who can overcome bureaucratic procedure, get things done fast in the Department and with other agencies, and reply to the Ambassador—if necessary within a few hours. Yet an Ambassador's usual counterpart in Washington—the Country Desk Officer—may not have real authority to staff out an issue, even within the State Department, and, beyond that, he is seldom the equal of the Ambassador in experience and judgment. As Ambassador Foy D. Kohler told the Subcommittee:

I personally have a great deal of sympathy for the idea that Secretary Rusk put forward, here, that the level of backup of the embassies abroad ought to be raised, supplemented, so that you in fact have a kind of duplicate of our mission here, backing us up.

*A loosening of Washington's apron-strings.*—All too often an experienced envoy in the field is second-guessed by a junior official in Washington who is less qualified to judge either the issue or the tactics. Within the limits of general guidance and instructions, an Ambassador should have broad discretion as to the timing, form, and level of approach to the government to which he is accredited. It is plain, however, that Washington "overinstructs" its Ambassadors. In part, to be sure, this may be the fault of an Ambassador. As retired Ambassador and former Deputy Under Secretary of State H. Freeman Matthews told the Subcommittee:

I made it a practice never to seek instructions unless I was either in doubt as to policy or felt that the weighty reinforcement of Washington instructions would enhance the chances of success in obtaining our objectives. \* \* \* I have felt that too often Ambassadors have shown too much

caution or timidity, usually those with lesser experience or unfamiliarity with the way wheels mesh and grind in Washington and what is involved in getting out an instruction to the field.

It is obvious that an Ambassador's first job is to carry out his instructions. The problem is to find a balance between the extremes of overinstruction, on the one hand, and freewheeling, on the other. On many occasions, an Ambassador can usefully indicate to Washington that he intends to act in a certain way by a certain date, unless otherwise directed—a practice known in the Navy's book as "UNODIR."

*A curb rein on special Washington emissaries.*—There appears to be a belief in Washington that some alchemy of jet travel will convert indecisiveness in Washington to decisiveness in the field. It would be better on many occasions for Washington to make up its mind and to issue appropriate instructions to its Ambassador. The special negotiator has a role when highly technical issues must be worked out or when a matter arises of great sensitivity or difficulty, requiring the presence of someone clearly outranking the Ambassador and, most important, closely associated with the President's current thinking. But the practice of commuter-trips by special emissaries is now clearly overdone, and a serious consequence is to erode the prestige and authority of an Ambassador in the eyes of the local government.

*Discouragement of back-door approaches to Washington.*—Sometimes when a foreign government has taken a matter up with the American Ambassador without receiving satisfaction, it has used its Washington embassy to press its claim. And worse, the maneuver has sometimes worked. It goes without saying that the authority of our Ambassador is not enhanced in the process. If Washington decides that a concession should after all be made, our Ambassador should normally be permitted to take the matter up again in his own way and to use the occasion to strengthen his own position in the eyes of the local government as a person of influence in his government.

A related point was mentioned to the Subcommittee by retired Ambassador Ellis O. Briggs:

I have detected across the years a tendency on the part of the Department of State to call in the foreign ambassador and give him good news to convey to his government, but to instruct the American Ambassador in the field to break the bad news to the foreign government. I have had it happen to me time and again.

*A clamp-down on the open mouth policy.*—The tendency of touring juniors to talk is a perennial problem. An official who would be scarcely visible in a group photograph of the Washington hierarchy and who could not attract an audience anywhere in the United States on the basis of his own reputation is understandably flattered to find attentive audiences abroad, where, unlike the United States, there may be a correlation between the length of a man's title and his importance. The resulting clutter of speeches is, as Ambassador David Bruce told the Subcommittee, "sometimes extremely disruptive."

Ordinarily—visits of the President or the Secretary of State and a handful of other officials apart—an Ambassador, not a troupe of

visiting firemen, should be the spokesman for the American government. Once the firemen have left, an Ambassador may have an unnecessary and difficult job of tidying up, not to mention the fact that the value of his own words may have been depreciated by the prolixity of his departed guests.

*A non-stop fight against over-reporting.*—The in-boxes of Washington and the field are overflowing with papers—thoughtful and otherwise. To the degree that we overburden Washington as audience, and the field as source, with broadside reporting, we reduce the time available in both places to work on things that matter to Presidents and Ambassadors.

Professor Richard Neustadt said to the Subcommittee:

I suspect that while nuclear weapons have introduced a new dimension of risk, another dimension of risk has been introduced by typewriters, mimeograph machines, radio, telegraph, and telephone. Choking people to death with information is one of the oldest bureaucratic techniques known to man. Never have there been such opportunities as now.

Occasional efforts to correct over-reporting will not yield lasting results. The fight must be waged continuously. Ambassador David Bruce spoke to this problem before the Subcommittee:

With the growth of traffic between countries and increasing population, I see no way to control the flood of paper except from the standpoint of requirements. The essential has to be separated from the nonessential; for example, reports should not be asked for on things which substantively have little importance. In other words, requirements ought to be screened down as far as it is possible to screen them.

Reporting for action purposes should be pithy and to the point. Reporting for information purposes must be increasingly analytic if it is to be useful to the policy maker. In addition, a disciplined restraint needs to be exercised by both the senders and the receivers of messages. Without such restraint, even the best definition of requirements will be ineffective in holding down the volume of words.

#### IV. The Modern Ambassador: Adviser

In thinking about problems of administration, too much attention tends to be paid to system and perhaps too little to men and their relationships. System is obviously important. But policy is not the product of a system. It is the product of responsible men who are in touch with one another.

General Lauris Norstad, Statement before the Senate Subcommittee on National Security Staffing and Operations, March 11, 1963

Basic policy decisions will continue to be made in Washington—for obvious reasons. Yet it is up to the Ambassador to make clear to Washington what he believes is needed in his country of assignment, and what he thinks is likely to work. The advice of our Ambassadors should be significant in shaping policy, and could be more important than it has been in the past.

Since an Ambassador contributes to the policy process from the perspective of a single-country embassy, his advice may often appear parochial or irrelevant—and sometimes it is just that. His ability to give helpful counsel, and to get attention paid to it by policy officers in Washington, depends in great measure on seeing his country problems in the perspective of American policy as a whole.

#### CONSULTATION

Today more than ever before our Ambassadors need to keep in close touch with thinking in Washington. They should frequently return to Washington—probably in the usual case for a week or ten days of consultation two or three times a year—although it may be desirable to alternate now and then with their deputies. It is false economy, as Congress should note, to skimp on such consultations: the cost should be more than offset by improved understanding between Washington and the field.

Retired Ambassador and former Under Secretary of State Livingston T. Merchant put it this way to the Subcommittee:

\* \* \* I am satisfied that unless you periodically and frequently, as an Ambassador, reimmerse yourself in both the atmosphere and the stream of policymaking in Washington, you can become quite rapidly removed from reality.

Moreover, I think the signature at the bottom of an Ambassador's telegram is or can be certainly more impressive with the President and the Secretary and the top hierarchy of the Department and the top officials of other Government agencies principally concerned if there is a continuing, personal, restored relationship.

#### PLANNING

Consultation is also a key to better use of the embassy in planning. A mystique has grown up around the idea of planning which favors the notion that planning requires talents found only in Foggy Bottom. Although the comprehensive planning paper, in which all contingencies are itemized (except the ones circumstances will produce) and all possible courses of U.S. action are carefully delineated (except the one we will actually follow), may be useful, its importance is vastly overestimated. It is partly because "comprehensiveness" has triumphed in planning circles that Presidents and Secretaries of State are properly skeptical about endorsing country and regional plans. The planner's world too often has a dream-like logic.

To be sure, foreign affairs, like defense, now involves large programs with long lead-times. The Executive Branch must budget and Congress must appropriate on the basis of plans and programs drawn up well in advance of the circumstances to be faced. Detailed planning is therefore necessary, although it probably has been carried too far in some areas. In this connection it is well to bear in mind the warning of Wilfred J. McNeil, former Comptroller of the Defense Department:

An effort to be too accurate or too precise can get the real objective lost in the details.

Yet it is a matter of importance that we improve our capabilities for intelligently relating programs to basic national policies.

No one should be misled by this activity. It does not provide a preview of events to come. A plan is nothing but today's best guess about what and where next year's campaigns will be and what resources will be required to wage them. It should be as good as possible but it will seldom, if ever, be more than a rough guide to action, and it should have flexibility built into it.

In this connection the State Department's Policy Planning Council is working with officers at home and abroad on a series of strategic studies, called National Policy Papers, intended to be operational plans governing all U.S. programs in certain critical countries. It is to be hoped that these papers will help prepare Washington and the field for prompt and flexible responses to the unforeseen dangers and opportunities that the future will surely bring.

Planning in the sense of detailed programs is not a cure-all and may be a narcotic. The conduct of foreign affairs will continue to be mainly a matter of detecting changes promptly and of devising action quickly and appropriately. No plan is a satisfactory substitute for a strategic and tactical sense, though it may be essential as a basis for building capabilities. A sense of strategy that cuts to the heart of an issue is the vital element and it is not likely to express itself in the form of "comprehensive" papers—the appropriate image is the scalpel not a filing case or, for that matter, an IBM computer.

Seen in this light, as the shaping of strategy and the building of capabilities, an Ambassador and his staff should have important contributions to make to policy planning. Their involvement in operations, so often cited as an obstacle to their participation in planning, is, or, should be, a positive advantage. For it is in the course of actual operations that opportunities are discovered and weaknesses in our position detected. This does not mean, of course, that a field commander will not be overruled by GHQ or an Ambassador by his President and Secretary of State. It does mean that they should not treat lightly the insights and advice of their men on the spot. If these men offer few insights and poor advice the cure is not to disregard them but to move them—or remove them.

Given the ease and velocity of modern travel and communications, Washington and the field should be able to collaborate more easily than ever before on both parts of the planning task—the making of guiding decisions and the preparation of country and regional programs. Officers from Washington and from the field should frequently work together—in both places—and State should be encouraged to seek funds from Congress adequate to permit such collaboration.

### V. The Modern Ambassador: Executive

\* \* \* Government has now become gigantic at the very moment in history when time itself is not merely a measure, or a dimension, but perhaps the difference between life and death \* \* \* This huge organization would be hard enough to run if authority were given where responsibility was placed. Yet, that frequently is not the case.

Robert A. Lovett, Statement before the Senate Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, February 23, 1960

Secretary of State Dean Rusk made this comment to officers of the State Department in 1961:

If the Department of State is to take primary responsibility for foreign policy in Washington, it follows that the Ambassador is expected to take charge overseas.

Because an Ambassador serves as the personal representative of the President—and because his primacy in the mission has been affirmed in directives by three Presidents—that might seem to take care of the problem. But it does not.

The catch is this: in practice, the primacy of an Ambassador among American representatives is no more fully accepted than the primacy of the State Department with respect to matters administered by other agencies. A military assistance advisory group (MAAG), for example, which is deep in operations and has its own reporting line to the Pentagon, does not welcome an Ambassador stepping between it and the Pentagon on matters of budget, program, personnel, or operations. The political counselors and other members of the diplomatic staff, however, have no line of reporting except through the Ambassador; they are fully dependent on him, and naturally have great interest in supporting him. Other elements fall somewhere between these two positions. USIS is closer to the diplomatic position, while CIA comes closer to the MAAG position, and AID is somewhere in the middle.

Important elements of our major missions thus look beyond the Ambassador to intermediate headquarters or Washington for guidance, support, and staff, and their loyalties tend to run in the same direction. This fact was recognized in President Kennedy's 1961 letter to Chiefs of Mission:

Needless to say, the representatives of other agencies are expected to communicate directly with their offices here in Washington, and in the event of a decision by you in which they do not concur, they may ask to have the decision reviewed by a higher authority in Washington.

The differences of concern and loyalty separating elements in a modern diplomatic mission are the cause of much past difficulty, distracting interagency rivalry, and confusion of effort. They will continue to be a source of trouble. On specific issues, however, an Ambassador's support may be useful and this strengthens his influence. It is also evident that a strong Ambassador can do a great deal to pull a mission together and give the American effort in a country focus and impact. He is the "boss"—if he wants to be and works at it—until and unless he is overruled by Washington.

### THE COUNTRY TEAM

Each Ambassador struggles afresh to make the units and people he finds around him work in ways which match his idea of what is needed.

Many Ambassadors have found the country team concept a helpful coordinating technique. "Country Team" entered the language via the Clay Paper in 1951—an interdepartmental agreement providing that the Ambassador and the heads of the military and economic aid programs were to "constitute a team under the leadership of the Ambassador."

The country team concept was introduced in many embassies during the 50's, and has generally been used to good advantage. The prudent Chief of Mission composes the country team meeting according to his own view of the scope and priorities of the job facing him. If skillfully managed and chaired by strong Ambassadors, country team meetings can be useful—to assure regular consultation by an Ambassador with his key civilian and military advisers, to give each adviser his say, and to provide a set procedure for an Ambassador to hear conflicting viewpoints before committing himself.

Yet, like other inter-agency committees, some country teams exact a toll by diluting the authority of the Ambassador, obscuring the responsibility for getting things done, slowing decision-taking, and generally wasting time. The itch to get in the act—what Robert Lovett has called the "foulup factor in our equation of performance"—plagues the field as well as Washington.

It is worth commenting that the purpose of the country team has become at least as much to make the ambassadorship serve the needs of the members of the mission as to make the latter serve the former. In a 1960 circular instruction, Secretary of State Christian A. Herter gave this warning:

\* \* \* The country team concept which is used to such excellent advantage in many countries as a vehicle of coordination under the leadership of the Ambassador must not be permitted to become a vehicle for decisions which are in the final analysis the responsibility of the Chief of Mission.

Wisely, the Department of State has opposed mandatory introduction of the country team technique, on the assumption that Chiefs of Mission should be free to exercise their discretion as to the best coordinating methods for the task in a given country.

Where there is an area commander of U.S. forces, for example, a critical factor is the direct relationship between the Ambassador and the commander. It is obvious that a Chief of Mission is not going to interfere in the conduct of campaigns and troop training, but he can help the commander function within general U.S. policy. Speaking of the embassy and U.S. forces in Japan, Ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer made this comment before the Subcommittee:

Actually, we have an extremely close relationship. We have a country team which formalizes this relationship, but the essence of it is the fact that the commander of the U.S. forces in Japan \* \* \* and I are in very close contact.

It is like the traditional school, one person at each end of a log. We are two people at each end of a sofa, and we get together all of the time and talk over each of our problems \* \* \*

Similarly, in a country where our Ambassador finds himself dealing with a commander of NATO forces—or United Nations forces—his personal relationship with the commander may be a key to accomplishment.

#### NEXT STEPS

If the Ambassador is to play the supervisory and coordinating role which postwar Presidents have verbally assigned him, the time has arrived to strengthen his hand. The following steps commend themselves:

*First:* Arrangements could be made which permit an Ambassador, as part of a State Department review at Budget Bureau invitation, to comment on proposed annual and supplemental budget and program requests for activities of all departments and agencies affecting his assigned country. He could be permitted to raise objections regarding the foreign policy implications of the programs, where appropriate. This would bring the Ambassador into one of the key coordinative processes in government, the budget process. Such a possibility is now under study in the Executive Branch. The arrangement would reinforce an Ambassador's authority by increasing the dependence of the various mission elements on him. At the same time, such advance information would help him in his forward planning.

*Second:* It should become standard practice to consult with an Ambassador prior to the assignment of key representatives of other agencies to his embassy and prior to the designation of a commander of U.S. forces who will be stationed in the country. Such advance consultation is a sensible form of insurance where the quality of the relationship between an Ambassador and an appointee is a critical factor.

*Third:* President Kennedy's 1961 letter to Chiefs of Mission includes this paragraph:

If in your judgment individual members of the Mission are not functioning effectively, you should take whatever action you feel may be required, reporting the circumstances, of course, to the Department of State.

To enhance an Ambassador's authority in this connection, Ambassador Merchant made this useful suggestion:

\* \* \* when an Ambassador is appointed to his post, and periodically when he is back in Washington, I think that he should go around and talk to the heads of the other departments and agencies who have representatives attached to his embassy, and establish the understanding that the head of that other department or agency will without argument withdraw and replace an individual representative of his department or agency if the Ambassador discreetly and privately communicates to him that he is dissatisfied with his performance or his attitude or his cooperation in the mission. \* \* \* then you give effectively to representatives of the other agencies a sense of uncertainty as to whether their sole source of future preferment is the head of their own agency.

*Fourth:* Ways should be found to give an Ambassador more freedom to use the good officers in his own mission where they are most needed. Under present practices, with each department and

agency staffing its own overseas posts, each Washington headquarters tries to put its best people in its most critical spots around the world. As a result, talents are unevenly distributed and any one mission will have a limited number of first-rate officers. It is obviously important that an Ambassador have considerable flexibility to use his best people in the most urgent tasks. In recent years, Washington agencies, like mother hens, cluck too much when an Ambassador dares reassign one of their chicks.

*Fifth:* Chiefs of Mission should take the lead in jogging Washington to trim excess field staff and consolidate overlapping jobs. In particular, the administrative complement in a mission—often more generous than is needed—should be held down. Understaffing can be the best staffing. If officers have more to do than they can possibly do, they are more likely to do what is important.

*Sixth:* In some missions economic activities can be further integrated. For example, an embassy's economic section and the AID mission can be placed under the direction of a single officer who is both Minister for Economic Affairs and director of the AID mission. This practice has proved its worth in many posts.

*Seventh:* Too many military representatives report directly to the Ambassador—a situation which tends to weaken rather than strengthen their position in the mission. Serious thought should be given to a single Defense Attaché designated by the Department of Defense—who could be an officer of the U.S. military service that was also the most important U.S. service in the country or area—with such assistants as needed from the three services.

*Eighth:* In missions where military problems are important, Foreign Service Officers with relevant experience and other qualifications to assist with politico-military problems are being assigned to the Ambassador, sometimes as special assistants. This appears to be a helpful approach to problems of political-military coordination, and should be encouraged.

*Ninth:* On many fronts our government is seeking to accomplish its goals through regional programs and international agencies, but it has not yet taken adequate steps to relate the American country mission and program (AID, MAAG, USIA and Cultural Exchange) to multilateral efforts. This is a complicated and emotionally charged area that warrants careful appraisal.

*Tenth:* If an Ambassador is to meet his responsibilities, he needs swift, secure and survivable communication with Washington and with our Ambassadors at other posts. But the State Department has been tardy in making use of modern communications equipment and personnel. As things stand, an Ambassador may not have immediate access to as rapid, reliable and sophisticated means of communication as other American elements in his country of assignment.

The State Department recently commented:

In the fall of 1962 the full pressure of the Cuban crisis overwhelmed the technical capabilities then available leading to the initiation of basic and sweeping improvement in planning and action. A start has been made; much more remains to be done.

In designing and operating the National Communications System (NCS), Executive Branch officials should ensure that the needs of our Chiefs of Mission in every part of the world are fully met.

## VI. The Ambassador in the Nation's Service

As the personal representative of the President of the United States  
\* \* \* you are part of a memorable tradition which began with Benjamin  
Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, and which has included many of our most  
distinguished citizens.

President John F. Kennedy, Letter to American Ambassadors,  
May 29, 1961

There is, of course, no ideal Chief of Mission. In the modern circumstances, there is heavy emphasis on the Ambassador as Executive. Strong executive leadership is important. But perhaps the most valuable attributes an Ambassador can possess are the capacity to understand the forces building up in a society and the skill to influence events in some degree in accordance with our national policy.

Today, the caliber of our Chiefs of Mission is high. The American people should be thankful for the ability and dedication of those who now head our missions abroad. But there is still room for improvement in matching persons and posts, and in keeping a competent Ambassador on the job long enough for him to become fully effective—and longer.

### CAREER AND NONCAREER AMBASSADORS

In appointing an Ambassador, there is no good alternative to reliance upon the Secretary of State—working with the Director General of the Foreign Service and other top Department officers—to give the President a short slate of candidates for his consideration and choice of a nominee for proposal to the Senate for “advice and consent.”

Time was when an ambassadorial post was a normal means of rewarding men for their services or contributions to a political party. It has almost passed. Today two out of three Ambassadors have risen through the ranks of the career service, and a substantial proportion of the rest qualify as professionals by virtue of long diplomatic service or experience in closely related fields.

The old argument about the merits of career versus noncareer appointments is getting a hollow ring. At present and in future most American Ambassadors will come from the career Foreign Service, although there will continue to be room for noncareer Ambassadors with special qualifications. There is no justification for the appointment of noncareer men and women who lack such qualifications, for there are no “safe” posts left in today's world.

In this matter, the occasional exception will prove the rule, and the rule is to choose an individual of unquestioned competence for the particular post.

All Embassy posts should be open to the ambition of a professional officer. In this connection Ambassador Bruce commented:

\* \* \* to have it known that the American Government  
does not make it possible for a career officer, unless he has  
outside resources, to be Ambassador to Great Britain, I think,  
is almost a national shame.

Funds should be provided and allocated for maintenance allowances, entertainment, salary, etc. so that no Ambassador need draw on private means to meet the legitimate financial burdens of his post. Again, Congress take note.

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If career appointees are to constitute a substantial proportion of our Chiefs of Mission, the Foreign Service must produce more senior officers of great ability. One important approach is to give promising officers throughout their career roughly a 50-50 division of service between Washington and the field, thus exposing them regularly to the wider perspectives of American government at home. Other useful steps include: the recent emphasis on more rapid promotion of outstanding younger officers; giving potential Chiefs of Mission consular posts and managerial jobs in operating agencies like AID and USIA—to test their mettle as executives; and reserving the post of deputy chief of mission to potential candidates for ambassadorial assignment. Ambassador Samuel D. Berger made this point to the Subcommittee:

The deputy position is the final testing and training ground for Ambassadors, and this assignment should be reserved for officers whose record clearly indicates that they are promising material for ambassadorships. The deputy chief of mission position should not be filled by any officer who is clearly not promising in this respect, nor should it be offered as a reward to an officer for long service, when it is clear that he cannot make the grade to Ambassador.

#### TOURS OF DUTY

Experience is a priceless asset, yet it is constantly thrown away by the government's traditional here-today-gone-tomorrow attitude toward Ambassadors.

We do not yet make good use of retired Ambassadors who possess particular competence in problems and areas of emerging importance. The government has only begun to tap this special reservoir of skills and experience.

The talents of our active Ambassadors are wasted by unduly abbreviated tours. The average tour of duty of Chiefs of Mission is now about 2 years and 10 months—but the shakedown period eats up about a year. In Ambassador Merchant's words:

One usually has to be at a post at least a year before one has gotten one's bearings, and established one's relationships, and sensed the important people that you want to cultivate and develop, and established your own rating system for the validity of the information and the soundness of the judgments that you extract, and learned the country and its problems.

Testimony to the Subcommittee was unanimous that the average ambassadorial term abroad should be longer—except in hardship posts. Ambassador Briggs said this:

No single move in the field of foreign affairs would pay greater dividends than leaving American envoys at their posts for sufficient time to capitalize on their knowledge and their experience.

Ideally, 4-year tours for Ambassadors would seem desirable, but the President and Secretary of State need to decide in each individual case when an Ambassador's service in a country passes the point of full effectiveness.

In the case of other officers working abroad, the turnover has tended to be too rapid. There is much to be said for 3 to 4 year terms for deputy chiefs of mission so arranged as to overlap with a new Ambassador for a year or so when this seems helpful—for it is highly important to have at least one experienced man in one of these two top jobs. In general, knowledgeable Foreign Service Officers who have special training in a particular area should not be yanked out short of a 3 to 4 year stay. In some posts, our performance has been strengthened by returning an able officer for a second tour of duty at a senior level.

Also, a really long-time officer can be useful. As Ambassador Berger expressed it:

In many countries it is desirable to keep a superior intermediate officer for longer than 4 years, so that he can develop language facility, wide contacts, and an encyclopedic knowledge of the country that can be tapped by his colleagues. One such long-time officer, with another being readied to take his place when he is transferred, can be invaluable in order to provide continuity in an embassy.

A further point: The government should move fast to fill an ambassadorship that becomes vacant. And, above all, the departure of an incumbent should not be announced until the last possible moment, and should be accompanied by the designation of his successor. An Ambassador loses influence from the moment it becomes known that he is leaving—and the longer the gap between then and the arrival of his successor, the more we invite trouble in a world where trouble always seems to be waiting on the doorstep.

#### A GREAT TRADITION

The American Foreign Service has a long and proud tradition dating from the diplomacy of Benjamin Franklin for the 13 colonies and continued to the present. Members of the Service have made distinguished contributions to the conduct of our foreign relations despite long periods when the nation was little aware of their existence and paid little heed to their sound advice. As recently as the 30's the nation would have greatly benefited had it listened to the warnings of some of its soldiers and diplomats, and the world might even have been spared what Winston Churchill has called "The Unnecessary War." More recently, our diplomats gave notice of the hardening of Soviet policy, long before Stalin launched the Cold War.

At any period the Foreign Service inevitably reflects in some degree the points of view and prejudices characteristic of the times. There are always some members of the Service who cannot keep up with the continuous succession of new problems and new requirements. But our Foreign Service has come a long way in recent years and it has first-rate officers who can hold their own in any company and in any country in the world.

In the swift moving currents of the 60's the nation needs as much as it ever has, the cool, professional advice and skill of those Americans who are devoting their lives to the study and practice of diplomacy.

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